ABOUT AGILITY OF VOICE.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF COLORATURE.

Floridity Once Acquired Gives Ease and Fluency to the Singer's Delivery—Hints About the Practice of Scales, Bound and Detached—The Difficult Trill.

It is quite true that this is not the day of the colorature singer. The modern lyric drama makes little use of the feats of agility with which the singers of a century ago astonished their auditors. The German lied, the reigning element in the song recital, narrows the sphere of vocal agility still more. Only in the oratorio does the singer of the present seem to be in imperative need of ability to execute cleverly what the earliest masters called "diminutions." Handel is inexorable in his demands, and Handel is apparently immortal, as he well deserves to be.

Nevertheless, agility is essential to every singer. The singer who has a command of florid style possesses a reserve store of technic which will always be of incalculable value to him. The vocal music of to-day is not embroidered with runs, trills, groups and other ornaments, as the operas of the late seventeenth century were, but it does contain thousands of progressions which can be executed with perfect smoothness and fluency by the agile voice, but by the singer untrained in colorature only awkwardly and uncertainly.

Even in the Wagner drama, that last extremity of dramatic style, there are many phrases calling for the ease and fluency of the colorature singer. What heavy voiced soprano can carol the music of the *Forest Bird* in "Siegfried"? How do all the impersonators of *Brünnhilde* stumble over the first clarion peal of the "Hojotoho" unless their voices have been trained to the execution of trills and leaps. Even the mordent, which Wagner made a characteristic feature of his melody, cannot be sung cleanly by a singer who has no agility.

It is true that the modern singer need not be able to sing such passages as Faustina and Cuzzoni sang with amazing brilliancy, nor need she rival Jenny Lind or Patti. There is a wide field for the artist who elects to leave "Semiramide" and "Lucia" and their kind out of her calculations. But how much more elegant and gracious will be her delivery of a pure cantilena if she can sing the fioriturі of the florid rôles. What gave Lilli Lehman her vast husbandry of resource but the fact that she was never in her greatest rôles taxing her technical resources? When she was singing *Isolde*, she had *Violetta* and *Norma* in reserve. They provided her with a fluent technic which made her "O sink hernieder" touching in the sinuous curves of its delicious cantilena.

Observe the perfect command of every interval and every progression displayed in Mme. Sembrich's song recitals. She is standing always on the firm foundation of a facility of execution far beyond anything demanded in the field of song literature. She is always within herself. She is never, as racing people say, extended.

It is impossible to overestimate the value of agility of voice. Hence every singer should strive to acquire a fluent colorature. There is only one way to get it, and that is by practice. The pianist acquires rapidity of finger by beginning with simple five finger exercises and advancing as fast as he conquers one form of agility to the next one. The singer has to do the same thing. There is no royal road to agility. Teachers who profess to know tricks by which a perfect trill or a flawless scale can be acquired in three lessons or four are charlatans, and they know they are.

There is an old story about Porpora and his famous pupil, Caffarelli, one of the wonderful male sopranists of the early eighteenth century. It is said that Porpora wrote on a single sheet of music paper all the feats that could be performed by the voice and set Caffarelli to work at them. After two years the discouraged student began to complain that he made no progress. Porpora reminded the youth that he had promised to do precisely as his teacher bade him. Caffarelli went back to his sheet of paper. To make the story short, Porpora is said to have kept him at it for six years, and then dismissed him with the words, "Go, my son, you are the greatest singer in the world."

In those days to be a great singer meant to have perfect breath control, absolute accuracy of intonation, full command of a sustained and beautiful cantilena, a perfect messa di voce and portamento, and ability to execute the most appalling difficulties in ornament. It has been well said that in technic the singers of to-day are tyros compared with those of the Caffarelli period. The passages which they sang with dazzling brilliancy would stagger almost any of our colorature artists.

It is not desirable, therefore, that the singer of our time should set out to acquire an agility which would enable him to rival the vocalists of Handel's operas. Yet he certainly ought to learn how to sing the music of those works, for that is the most admirable of all colorature music. It is the most musical, the most vocal and the most artistic. It unites genius in composition with a perfect knowledge of writing for the voice. One who can sing Handel fluently and expressively need have no fear of any technical difficulties in the music heard on the operatic stage to-day.

It is unnecessary, however, to confine one's self to Handel. There were fairly good masters before and after his time. Mozart, for example, provides opportunities for the study of florid music, and whatever he wrote commands the attention of the singer. Mozart was a greater inventor of melody than even Handel, and he knew well how to write for the voice. The grand airs of "Don Giovanni" are living evidence of his mastership. Turning to the German school, one finds the writers of the big dramatic bravura airs, such as "Abscheulicher" and "Ocean, Thou Mighty Monster." These airs demand splendor of tone, great power and volume, as well as agility. They should never be undertaken by singers who have not first learned how to sing Handel and Mozart.

Rossini, Donizetti and even Bellini provide good examples of the colorature style of the early nineteenth century, a style well adapted to the voice, but far less admirable in its musical qualities than the styles of Handel and Mozart. The singer should not neglect any of these masters. However, before the student can study the arias of the famous composers he must acquire the elements of agility.

Colorature singing is best learned from some one who has mastered it. Hints may be given in print, to be sure, just as they may in regard to almost anything else, but, after all, the teacher is the true guide to the acquirement of the ability to sing florid music. It may be said here, however, that the foundation of agility in vocal music is the same as that in instrumental performance, namely, the scale.

Short passages, constructed of successive notes of the scale, form the best elementary exercises. These passages should rest heavily on some one tone as a root from which the others are to be derived. In singing an ascending exercise, for example, the student should get firmly fixed in his mind the pitch of the tonic of the scale, which should form the starting point of the exercise.

Then if the passage to be used comprises five tones, ending with the dominant, he should get the pitch of the dominant thoroughly established in his mind. He might sing the interval several times from tonic to dominant to get the relative pitch firmly established, for it is vital to clean colorature execution that the intonation be accurate. If the intonation is imperfect, the colorature will always be slovenly, and wholly without brilliancy.

When the student has his ear perfectly attuned to the interval of the fifth from tonic up to dominant, he should sing the scale ascending through those five tones. Practice of this sort should never be rapid nor loud. The passage should be sung piano and with a light touch, care being taken that each tone is clearly brought out and neither smeared over into the next, nor separated from it by a noticeable stroke of the glottis.

After the student can sing this ascending passage with comparative fluency, he should sing the same notes in inverse order, descending. After he can execute both passages cleanly, he may essay an octave. In singing octave scales it is essential that the pupil should get the tonic, the dominant and the leading tone very firmly defined in his mental ear.

Lamperti gives an exercise in which the scale is sung very slowly with long holds on these tones. After singing the scale this way Lamperti's pupil is advised to sing it with comparative rapidity, lightly and cleanly. At the termination of the scale the student should sing an arpeggio of the four tones of the chord descending. This will hold him to the intervals of the chord. In practicing the scale of an octave descending the student should begin with the lower tonic and take the interval of an octave upward and then sing down the scale to the lower tonic again.

Lablache, Manuel Garcia, Panseron, Winter, Martini, Garaude, Manstein, Fetis and others recommend a systematic progress from vocalises on two notes up to the octave. Garcia says: "Those who wish to sing scales or other passages without having begun on two, three or four notes risk failing to execute roulades." He holds that it is easier to sing a passage of two notes than one of three, and one of three than one of four, and that, therefore, the correct progress begins with two.

The exercise which he gives for two notes is simple. The student is required to sing, say, C and D below the clef in alternation the first time in quarter notes, four to the measure, then in eighth notes and finally in sixteenth notes.

The exercise for three notes consists of the progression C, D, E, D, in quarter notes, then in eighth notes and then in sixteenth notes. Any teacher following out this idea can construct a series of progressive exercises for his pupils. These exercises are recommended by Lemaire and Lavoix as "an excellent gymnastic by which the voice will be rendered supple and agile." The "ah" sound is the most favorable for the majority of voices, though teachers will doubtless find cases in which some other vowel sound will better bring out the best qualities of tone in running passages and perhaps correct some faulty pose of the organs.

Lilli Lehmann believes in the practice of what she calls the "great scale" previous to all exercises in agility. The great scale is nothing more than the diatonic major scale divided into groups of long notes with pauses for breath. Doubtless an exercise of this sort would aid in warming up the voice and fixing the intonation.

After sufficient facility has been acquired in the execution of scale passages in fluent style, the pupil will need to take up the delivery of staccato passages. These are best suited to the high tones of the soprano voice, because of the delicate and neat execution which they demand. Detached or staccato tones are executed by attacking each with a stroke of the glottis and quitting it immediately after the attack.

Lemaire and Lavoix say: "These sounds, of very short duration, should be articulated with dryness and without length, with a moderate opening of the mouth, and perfectly detached from one another. The respiration is cut short after each tone and is suspended; it is not correct to breathe, for a series of detached notes should be executed always with the same breath."

Chromatic scales offer difficulties of no small kind to the teacher and the student. On the method of approaching them most of the old masters are agreed. They found from their extensive experience in instructing that it was necessary to fix firmly in the minds of their pupils the intonation of chromatic intervals before they permitted students to attack the chromatic scale.

They therefore devised a series of exercises constructed on the same principle as Garcia's series of two, three, four and more tones in the diatonic scale. For example, one exercise begins with C, D, C in the first measure, while the second consists of C, C sharp, D. These two measures were written in quarter notes and were intended to be sung slowly and carefully in order that the student should get the difference between the whole interval and the half interval clearly impressed on his mental ear.

Having sung C, C sharp; D correctly, the pupil next sings D, D flat, C. Finally he exercises on the ascending and descending series. This exercise, it will be noticed, takes in the interval of a second. Next the pupil is permitted to exercise on the interval of a major third, always singing the interval itself before attacking the chromatic steps of which it is composed.

By a series of progressive exercises of this kind the student is carried forward till he sings a chromatic scale of an octave. Then comes the practice of increasing rapidity, beginning again with the interval of a second. This is the method of the French Conservatoire, which adopted it from the works of Garcia, Concone, Martini and others.

It is, or ought to be, clear to the reader that Garcia's exercise on two notes is the best possible preparation for the trill. The only way to learn how to trill is to practise singing the two tones of which a trill is made till one can sing them sufficiently rapidly.

The exercise must be proportioned to the pupil's respiration. It should be in short passages at the beginning. The student should let the breath pour itself out gently with perfect equality and without effort of either the chest or the larynx.

Tosi, Mancini and Hiller recommend beginning the study of the trill in the earliest lessons, working at it every day, but always a little at a time, without trying to make it too long and always stopping the exercise as soon as the effort makes itself felt in the larynx.

Other masters advocate postponing the study of the trill till the voice is fairly well placed. It must be borne in mind that in the days of such masters as Tosi and Mancini agility was a prime requisite in singing. To-day the study of colorature is rather a means than an end. Some of the masters of to-day do not insist on the practice of colorature. Giovanni Lamperti says, Where the pupil "has no natural gift do not waste time on coloratura study." Again, he says of the trill: "Not every voice is suited for this embellishment; heavy voices may even be injured by purposeless trill practice." The present writer believes that trill study should begin when coloratura is taken up, after tone control has made considerable progress.

Agility should be acquired by every singer. Some will naturally acquire it in a greater degree than others, but all can acquire it to some extent, and it is the foundation of ease and grace and fluency of delivery. It is an essential part of the beautiful old art of bel canto, upon which to-day singing must make its foundation.

W. J. HENDERSON.

NOTES OF MUSIC EVENTS.

The sixth and last concert of the Kneisel Quartet will be given in Mendelssohn Hall on Tuesday evening, April 10, at 8:15 o'clock. The programme will be as follows: String quartet, op. 51, No. 1, C minor, Brahms; Quartet for piano and strings, op. 30, A major, Chausson; String quartet, op. 27, G minor, Grieg. In Chausson's Quartet the piano part will be played by Rudolph Ganz.

The Russian Symphony Orchestra's final concerts of its third season will take place Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon, April 7 and 8, at Carnegie Hall, under Modest Altschuler's direction. The soloist will be Emile Sauret, the French violinist, who has not been heard in New York for several seasons, and who will play the Dvorak concerto.

The Olive Mead Quartet will conclude its season at Mendelssohn Hall on Tuesday evening. Haydn's G major and Schubert's D minor quartets and a sonata for 'cello and piano by Marcello will be played. Susan Metcalfe will sing.

At the Hippodrome to-night Victor Herbert and his orchestra will serve another course in the series of concerts this popular conductor is giving at the big playhouse. The programme will be the usual miscellaneous one, with a soloist of the masculine persuasion, in whom Mr. Herbert declares he has discovered a veritable "find." The difficulty of securing soloists who will find favor with his audiences has sent Mr. Herbert far afield, and thus Jean Dimitresco, a Rumanian tenor, will be the "guest" at to-night's concert. Mr. Dimitresco has sung in several Western cities, but his appearance here to-night will be his début. He has a record for appearances, having sung in practically every opera house of note on the European Continent, as well as several seasons at Covent Garden, in London. He has sung also in the larger cities of South America. He has recently signed contracts for a long season in Russia, but the social unrest there caused their cancellation, which gave him time for a long deferred visit to the United States.

The second concert of the New Music Society will take place at Carnegie Hall to-night. Maud Powell will play Henry Holden Huss's violin concerto in D minor, and orchestral novelties by David Stanley Smith and F. S. Converse will be heard.

Horatio Parker's "Hora Novissima" will be sung by the Church Choral Society at the Church of Zion and St. Timothy on Wednesday afternoon, April 25, and Thursday evening, April 26.

The Marum Quartet will bring its first season to an end on Thursday next at Cooper Union. This will be the fifth concert of the quartet, which consists of Ludwig Marum, Michel Bernstein and Joseph and Modest Altschuler. The purpose of the organization was to place high class chamber music within the reach of music lovers of limited means who cannot afford to pay the prices usually asked at such concerts. Many seats were sold at so low a price as 15 cents. The success of the concerts showed that they met a real want. No concert was heard by less than 1,000 persons, and at some of them the attendance reached as high a figure as 1,500.

Albert von Doenhoff will give a piano recital at Mendelssohn Hall on Wednesday evening.

F. X. Arens will present an entire programme by Wagner at the next and concluding set of People's Symphony Concerts, to be given Thursday, April 19, at Cooper Union Hall, Friday at Grand Central Palace, and Saturday at Carnegie Hall at 8:15 P. M. The programme will enlist the services of several prominent soloists and will include notable numbers from the Wagner operas. The list will embrace the "Tannhäuser" overture and selections from "Parsifal," "Siegfried," "Die Walküre," "Götterdämmerung" and the "Meistersinger." The orchestra will be enlarged for the occasion, which will fittingly close one of the most successful musical seasons of this commendable enterprise.

ANIMALS' EASY LIFE.

Winter Has Been So Mild That Many Have Made Early Appearance.

The animals that escaped the rigors of last winter have had an exceptionally easy life so far this year, which they certainly are entitled to.

Many covies of quail perished from cold and hunger last year. Rabbits that were unable to find food in sufficient quantities resorted to orchards and vineyards and did great damage by gnawing the trees and vines. Apple trees six inches in diameter were completely girdled by meadow mice and they also ruined many fine beds of raspberry and blackberry bushes.

Thus far the winter has been so mild, writes a correspondent of *Forest and Stream*, that even woodchucks and chipmunks have appeared from time to time. Gray squirrels could be found in the woods on any warm day in December, January and February. Although they seldom wander far from their holes in the trees at this season, the tracks of one were seen in the mud by the roadside fully half a mile from the woods.

Skunks have not "denned up," which last winter they were known to do early in December, and there was a period of six weeks when they did not leave their holes. Nowadays they are out in the fields nearly every night hunting for mice, and it is not at all improbable that by turning over stones and boards they catch a cricket or so, their favorite food.

January 21, 22 and 23 were exceptionally warm days and many animals were moving about. "Woolly bears," those black and yellow bristle covered caterpillars, the larvæ of the Isabella moth, were particularly active. The warm weather enticed them from their hiding places under logs, stumps, boards and stone piles and they were seen hurrying along the railroad tracks and country highways in considerable numbers.

Spiders spun their streamerlike webs from the ends of grass stalks and weeds. In some fields these streamer webs were as abundant as on autumn days.

A solitary turtle crawled out of the mud in the bottom of a pond or a stream and wandered down the road, where it was found by a much astonished countryman.

"Night walkers," those large earthworms that in summer come out of the ground after an evening rainstorm and are captured by the fishermen, were also seen. The few fowls that were fortunate enough to catch one seemed to appreciate the unexpected treat and were jealously pursued by their companions.

Wasps were reported from Troy, N. Y., and butterflies from Rutland, Vt. The butterflies doubtless were mourning cloak butterflies. All of them do not die as winter approaches; some hibernate under stones or board piles, in buildings or other places where they can find cover. The butterflies seen probably were some that had been deceived by the mild weather and had taken advantage of it to have an outing.

One would not think that the fishes would be influenced by a warm winter, nevertheless several good strings of suckers were caught in the Owego Creek in early February, although they usually refuse to bite until after the ice goes out in March or April.

More song sparrows have wintered over than usual, and red winged blackbirds, bluebirds, robbins, goldfinches, belted kingfishers and meadow larks have also been seen, still their presence is nothing unusual, as they have all been known to remain all winter when the weather was very severe.

The unexpected appearance of most of these animals is a good illustration of the effect of a mild winter on animals. Nature's creatures seem to have been sleeping with one eye open and the first few warm days brought many of them back to active life.

Sportsmen report that numbers of ruffed grouse have escaped the hunters, so if the present weather continues, all game will get through the winter in good condition. Already the lack of snow has saved the lives of many rabbits and such fur bearing animals as skunks, mink, musk rats and foxes, for without snow the hunters cannot track them so easily.

A WOODEN LEG HIS CAPITAL

Diplomacy Which Won Old Timber Toe an Income, a Home and a Wife.

BY SHAN F. BULLOCK.

On a day in June I was being driven from Lismahee to Garvagh ferry, when on the slope near Slaney bridge we overtook a cart. It was painted red, with blue sideboards. A shaggy donkey drew it at a snail's pace.

In it sat a man, right on the floor, and with his back leaning against a side board. He seemed asleep. The reins hung loose in his hand. His head hung low. His hat had fallen off.

The wind ruffled his long red hair. And while we waited for him to pull to one side, for the road is very narrow there, I noticed that he had a wooden leg.

"Hi, there! Wake up, ould Timber Toe," shouted Mickey the driver. "D'you imagine people have nothing to do but wait for you to finish your beauty sleep? Hi, hi, hi, wake up, dang your buttons, ould Timber Toe."

For all Mickey's stentorian eloquence, old Timber Toe sat unmoved, and the donkey kept on its funeral pace right in the middle of the road, so, his patience exhausted, down leaped Mickey from his perch, and taking the cart by its shaft ends, swerved it against the hedge, one wheel down, the other up on edge of the road.

Such rough treatment so startled the donkey that it stopped, and so jolted Timber Toe that he woke, looked about him, and caught sight of Mickey.

"Eh?" he said. "What's all this? Eh, now?"

"It's a lesson in manners I'm after giving you," answered Mickey. "D'you imagine you're the only mortal in the world? D'you think the road belongs to you? Away with you, for an ould vagabond!"

"But I'm drunk," said Timber Toe, the while an ineffable smile crept over his face. "Sure I'm drunk. Can't you see I'm drunk?"

"I see you're in the ditch," retorted Mickey, "and if you stay there till Judgment Day, it's small loss it will be. Tut, you ould vagabond!"

"But I'm drunk," said Timber Toe, his smile widening. "I'm as drunk as twenty tailors. Can't you see I'm drunk?"

"Then go to sleep again, and wake up a man," retorted Mickey, as he clambered to his perch, whipped up the gray mare and drove on.

And as we passed him, tilted back against the hedge, Timber Toe banged his wooden leg against a side board, waved a hand, and laughed.

"But I'm drunk," he shouted. "Can't you see I'm as drunk as twenty tailors?"

Thereafter on our way to the ferry I learned from Mickey, in course of certain disjointed remarks flung over his shoulder, that Timber Toe was a local character, that he had been selling peat in Lismahee, that every day of the week he could be found on the road and he's always telling the world how drunk he is, that he lived in a certain house we passed on the wayside and that the story of how he came to live there was worth hearing.

I was anxious to hear that story. Just then, however, business affairs occupied my mind; but returning to Lismahee in the evening we passed Timber Toe's house again, and sight of him seated on a wheelbarrow before the door, his wooden leg cocked up and him playing on a tin whistle, revived my interest in him, and I asked Mickey for his story.

"Sure and I'll tell you then," said Mickey, "with a heart and a half. But how can I find your ear and myself perched up here in the world. Wait till I get nearer you," said Mickey; so he clambered down from the dicky to the further seat, then pulled the mare into a jog trot, crossed his legs, and leaning toward me went on.

"You might think by the look of him," said Mickey in the voluble way which fitted so well his portly figure and ruddy face, "that himself yonder on the wheelbarrow, with his penny whistle and his red head and his simple countenance, was something of an innocent that wouldn't know the difference between a lump of sugar and a snowball. Well, you wouldn't be the first to trip over Timber Toe's wooden leg and rise all the wiser, maybe.

"He's no fool at all, let me tell you There's a power of knowledgeableness behind that smooth face of his. 'Twas no chicken came out of the egg when he was hatched.

"You think he was asleep yonder in the cart? You think he meant all that blarney about being drunk as twenty tailors? You think he's tootling there on the whistle just to keep the pigs quiet?

"Tut, no such a thing. All the innocence about Timber Toe is in the wooden leg and sure that's the cleverest part of him. It's made him what he is. He has played better tunes on it in his time than on the tin whistle.

"You're laughing, are you? Well, wait a minute.

"Timber Toe didn't always have the wooden leg. Up to the time he was 85 years of age he wore two boots and he was a kind of handy man in the workhouse beyond at Lismahee. Then he was foxy enough in a blundering way, willing to pass for a good natured fool, so long as people didn't keep too close an eye upon him.

"He was well liked. He'd smuggle in tea and tobacco for the paupers. He'd do his best for a rogue of a contractor. He'd run messages for the master and matron. He had a grin and pull at the cap for the guardians.

"And for sake of a trifle he was ready to do anything, from sitting up all night in the sick ward to lighting the fire under the big skilly boiler. So things went well with him, and his pocket got heavier.

"One day, however, Billy, that being his name in those days, was carrying a sack o flour to the store room when he slipped on the stairs, fell ten feet and broke his leg in two places. That was bad enough; but sure worse was to come, for the fractures didn't mend and inflammation set in and when Billy came out of the hospital he left the leg behind him.

"Done he was. Never again could he water the milk or call nineteen hundredweight of coal a ton. But he was Billy, you see.

"Every one pitied him. So the guardians had him up before them, said they were sorry and all the rest and dismissed him with a pension on the rate of five shillings a week for life.

"'Five shillings,' says Billy, 'and is that all you'll be giving a man that has buried a leg in your service?'

"'That is all we dare give,' answers the chairman.

"'And am I to starve in my one boot? asks Billy. "What can I do, myself and a leg and a crutch?'

"'Oh, we'll give you a wooden leg,' answers the chairman, 'and we'll keep it in repair and we'll give you a new one when it wears out—and that's the most we can do for you, Billy, my man.'

"Well, Billy said no more, but takes the five shillings and the wooden leg—'twas that gave him the nickname of Timber Toe—and goes telling his troubles to every one he meets.

"'A nice way to be treated,' says he, 'flung out upon the world,' says he, 'with three limbs and a half, and the pension of a militia man! Who'll give me work?' asks he. 'What Christian man with an appetite,' says he, 'can live on five shillings a week and sleep under a roof and put clothes on his back?'

"Like that Timber Toe talked, and people listened to him, and some one wrote to the papers, and a subscription was raised that brought him another half a crown a week, and a present of the ass and cart that obstructed us this morning.

"So far so good, but Timber Toe was only beginning. Before the wooden leg was a month old up he comes before the guardians again, and him hobbling on crutches.

"'Well, Billy, what is it now?' asks the chairman.

"'Sure your honors all,' says he, 'there was a flaw in the leg you gave me, and it's broke,' says he, 'and I don't know what to do!'

"It was a lie, to be sure, for the leg was at home in the corner; but guardians are simple people, and they believed the man, and voted him the price of a new stump. That encouraged Timber Toe.

"After a while up he comes again to the guardians with the first leg under his arm, and he shows them a crack in it, and sighs and groans, and marches out at last with another pound or so as good as in his pocket. Well, sir, another while passed, and here's my hero up before the guardians again, and he spins the same yarn, and gets more money; and so it goes on until at last the guardians think the cheapest thing to do is to give Timber Toe another half crown a week and make him responsible for his own legs.

"You'll notice that he had now ten shillings a week, and the ass and cart; but, sure, that was only a trifle, so away stumps Timber Toe to the Marquis himself and pulls off his cap and makes his laments and never leaves till for next to nothing at all he gets occupation of the house he's living in now, with a piece of turf-bog free, and half an acre of garden thrown in, and a present of old clothes, and a five pound note to buy furniture.

"Well, sir, Timber Toe was now a man of property, money in the bank, a pension for life, a good house to live in, a garden to grow all he wanted, and nothing in the world to do but drive a load of turf to Lismahee every day and sell it and drive home, as drunk as twenty tailors, like a gentleman. But he wasn't content yet. He wanted some one to keep him comfortable, and he wanted her with money.

"So he looks about him, and at last fixes on a woman beyond the lake that he thought would suit him. She was a fine, buxom lump of a girl, handy and good tempered, with nothing to spare in the way of good looks, but worth £50 and a cow or two for whoever changed her name. And Timber Toe, with his eye on the £50, goes to see her, and sits with his one toe in the ashes and makes himself pleasant, and at last gives out that, supposing the family and him can come to terms, he's willing to marry her.

"'Are you, then,' answers Judy. 'Faith, it's mighty obliging you are, but you may try somebody else,' says she.

"'And why?' asks Timber Toe.

"'Because of that,' answers Judy, looking at the wooden leg. 'I'd be afraid of you kicking me under the table with it.'

"'I know,' answers Timber Toe, and says no more, but stumps off, and stays away a week, and then comes back hobbling on two crutches.

"'And where's the leg gone?' asks Mary, herself that's sister to Judy.

"'I've burnt it,' came back. 'For Judy wouldn't have me with it, and so I've come to see if she'll have me without it. Will you, Judy? Ah, say you will.'

"And with that Judy's heart softened and she pitied the man, and she gave him the word.

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"Innocent you call him, with his red head and his tin whistle," said Mickey, turning toward me. "Faith, if you have a mind to be thinking that still, I'd advise you to turn back and ask a question or two of Judy. Innocent, by the Lord! Sure, one of his ancestors must have been a fox."

THEY LIVE IN A CHURCH.

Eight Old Ladies Keep House There—All the Comforts of Home.

The most curious almshouse in England, says the *Church Eclectic*, is St. Mary's Hospital at Chichester. There eight old ladies live actually in the church, a fine old building dating from 1680.

It was originally a monastery, but Queen Elizabeth turned it into an almshouse to endure as long as almshouses exist. The old ladies have two neat little rooms each, down the sides of the main church, with windows looking out on the garden.

They have each a coal supply, a kitchen range, water and gas. At a chapel daily services are held. The choir stalls are beautifully carved old oak, the original seats that the monks used.

TOBOGGANING IN FAVOR.

But America Has No Slide to Compare With Fine Ones Abroad.

Tobogganing at last promises to have a permanent place among the winter sports of this country. The slide at Ardsley has been decidedly in favor, and there are other "built" slides.

But, so far as is known to a writer on this subject who contributes his experience to *Health*, there is not anywhere in the United States a regular half or quarter mile toboggan slide maintained by a town or an association solely for the purpose of this sport.

Strangely enough, America—which has been rather indifferent to the sport—has achieved a worldwide reputation for its toboggans. Just as Birmingham, England, manufactures most of the brass idols worshipped in the Orient, so America makes sleds, coasters and toboggans for Switzerland, Norway, Sweden and Can-